

DECLASSIFIED 2020

TO: The Secretary

FROM: S/S B

FROM: EUR - Foy D. Kohler

SUBJECT: Talking Points for White House Meeting on Berlin

There is attached a paper suggesting a number of points which you may wish to cover during the White House meeting on Berlin scheduled for February 9. It has been prepared in such a way that a copy could be left with the President if you feel this is desirable.

Attachment:

Paper: Where Do We Go From Here on Berlin?

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S/O:EUR:GER:MJHillenbrand:all
2/7/62

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WHAT DO WE KNOW FROM HERE ON BERLIN?

1. To Bury or Not to Bury? If the Soviets want to bury the Berlin issue, is it in our interest to encourage this or should we push for some new arrangement which will provide a more definitive resolution of the question? The present state of indecision creates problems for the NATO and US military build-up and keeps the Western mood fluctuating from one extreme to the other on the basis of rumors and speculation as to Soviet intentions. On the other hand, no new and more or less formal arrangement which the Soviets would accept is likely to be as favorable to us as the status quo. Hence, on balance, if the Soviets give us any indication that they would like to bury the Berlin question or talk it to death, we would presumably wish to avoid saying or doing anything which would run counter to such an objective. Another possibility is that the Soviets may feel compelled at some point to go ahead with their separate peace treaty but reserve their prerogatives in the field of Allied access (a la the Bolz-Zorin exchange of letters). This, too, would be a desirable outcome from our point of view.

2. The French Problem. We have now reached the point where we must reluctantly conclude that, within the current framework of discussions with the Soviets, it will probably be impossible to meet the French prerequisite of a detente for their participation in negotiations. If such a detente can be achieved, it will presumably only be after we have gone much farther than the stage of exploratory talks. If the Soviets are willing to bury the Berlin question, formal negotiations may not be necessary or serve merely a camouflage function. At some point soon we will have to come to grips with the question of French non-participation. The legal problem can apparently be surmounted, if the French do not seek actively to prevent implementation of any agreement. On the other hand, we will probably have to make one more effort, at least for the record, to bring the French along.

3. Assuming the Thompson-Gromyko talks bog down completely and that nothing comes out of the Roberts' approach in Moscow, we seem to have the following ways of keeping discussion of the Berlin question alive either to ascertain once and for all whether the Soviets wish to bury the question or try to find some basis for a modus vivendi:

a. A fresh Summit Meeting. This can be ruled out at present, although a meeting between the President and Khrushchev should be held in reserve for a heightened crisis situation.

b. The Secretary could accept Gromyko's invitation to go to Moscow, perhaps on his way to the Far East meetings in mid-March. This might

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be considered if the situation deteriorates markedly in the next few weeks, but will probably not be desirable.

c. The Secretary could meet bilaterally with Gromyko in Geneva on the fringes of a possible conference of foreign Ministers to start off the disarmament discussions. This seems desirable and probably inevitable whatever the intervening developments. It might provide an opportunity to advance the dialogue further at a high level and to ascertain Soviet intentions more clearly.

d. Transfer of discussions to Washington. With the arrival of the new Soviet Ambassador, Dobrynin, bilateral discussions here on Berlin might be more fruitful. However, no matter what his relationship to Moscow, Dobrynin will be at the end of a long instruction line and any attempt to raise the subject directly with Khrushchev would still have to revert back to Moscow.

e. Use of the British channel including possibility of an intervention by Prime Minister Macmillan. It is unlikely that Roberts can accomplish anything which Thompson could not. Action by Macmillan cannot be excluded if there should be a marked deterioration in the situation or if the British are concerned about the development of a total impasse.

f. Bilateral talks between the Germans and Soviets. The indications are that most German officials, including Adenauer, are presently opposed to bilateral talks with the Soviets, although a reply will probably be made in due course to the Soviet memorandum handed Kroll on December 27, 1961. Apart from individual voices, such as that of FDP leader Mende, there has been little noticeable pressure exerted on the Government for such bilateral talks. From the US viewpoint, although there are many arguments pro and con, on balance there is probably more to be said in favor of than against a German effort to explore whatever possibilities may be inherent in the Soviet campaign to encourage bilateral discussions. We would certainly not wish to drive the Germans into bilateral talks against their own better judgment, but if they came to us at some point willing to try their luck, we would probably have more to gain than to lose by encouraging them, as full and trusted partners, to play a more active diplomatic role in our common cause. (A paper discussing the pros and cons in greater detail is available.) The timing and method of initiating talks would, of course, have to be carefully considered as well as their relationship to other discussions which might be going on with the Soviets. In any event, in view of the present German attitude, this does not seem to be something likely to develop in the immediate future.

h. Conclusion: Unless there is some unexpected break in the situation, the most desirable (though admittedly not completely satisfactory) course of action would seem to be:

a. To let the Thompson-Gromyko exchanges in Moscow run their course;

b. To contemplate

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b. To contemplate a meeting between the Secretary and Gromyko in Geneva in mid-March;

c. To await what Dobrynin may have to say upon his arrival here in Washington this month.

d. To encourage the Germans, if the Thompson talks reach a deadend and they seem inclined to take any initiative, to try the possibilities of bilateral conversations with the Soviets.

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